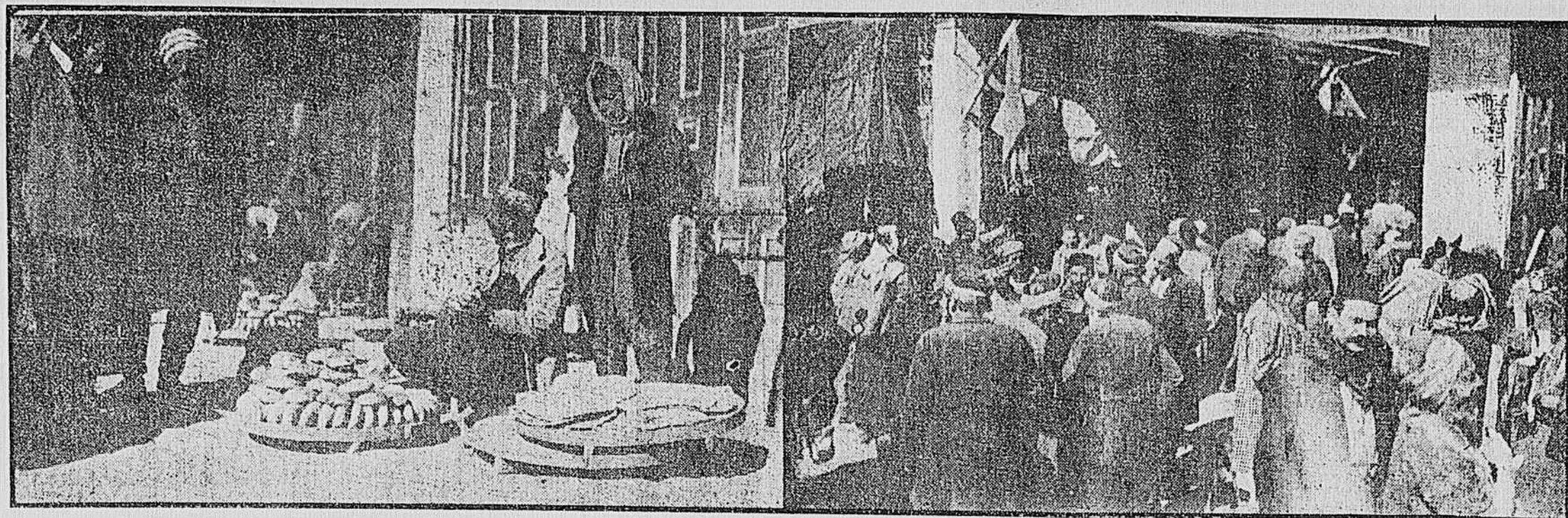


# Bazaars of Damascus--Queer Features of Business and Trade in Most Oriental of Cities--Among Saddlers and Cobblers



PEDDLING BREAD IN DAMASCUS.

BY FRANK D. CARPENTER.

Come with me for a walk through the bazaars of this the oldest of all the world's cities. They are more Oriental than those of Tunis or Cairo and more quaint than those of Constantinople. Take the street called straight, up which St. Paul came to meet Ananias. It is a vaulted tunnel, lighted only by a roof, which rises to a height of about 100 feet. Suppose you could cover lower Broadway at the top of its third story windows, and in place of the doors and windows of plate glass have the walls made up of cave-like stores opening out on the roadway. Let each store have a floor about as high as a chair, and let it be filled with the most gorgeous goods of the Orient. Let each have its own sort of ware, and the walls between the shops are little more than partitions of boards, and there is hardly a business establishment which the typical wall of the china shop could turn round in without losing his hide. The customers bargain standing out in the roadway, or sitting on the floors of the stores and hanging their heels in the street.

## Among the Saddlers and Cobblers.

The business is thoroughly classified. Each trade has its own section, and you can walk blocks which are filled with booths containing only one kind of goods. Take the saddle bazaar. It is 500 feet long, and the air is loaded with the rich smell of leather. Harness hangs from the walls, and inside are saddles for camels, donkeys and horses. There are zay trappings for Arabian steeds, and leather buckets in which one can carry water with him over the desert. There are also necklaces of blue beads to put on your neck to ward off the evil eye, and other charms for the journey.

The harness shops are twelve feet deep, each being a little factory where two or three saddlers sew at the back. In some places they are making harnesses of wood, and in others of leather beautifully decorated. A little further on is a bazaar making panniers for camels and donkeys, and not far away is a street where they handle nothing but shoes. The cobblers are making footwear of wood, wool and leather. They are cutting out sandals somewhat like the rain shoes of Japan. The finer ones are for the better class women, and they are beautifully made with mother-of-pearl. Such shoes are used at home and when Madame goes to the public bathhouse. They are worn



THE BAZAARS ARE MADE UP OF CAVE-LIKE STORES OPENING ON THE ROADWAY.

without stockings, and cost from 40 cents to \$5 a pair. In another place the merchants are selling shoes of red leather, such as are used by the country people and the poorer Damascans. They are of goatskin, camelskin or cowhide, and are without heels. The leather is not very well tanned, the shoes being kept on the racks until sold.

The average shoe shop is about fifteen feet wide, ten feet deep and twelve feet in height. The stock is hung to wooden nails driven into the walls, both in and outside the shop. The men customers stand in the street and try on the wares without the assistance of the merchant. The women examine the shoe through the eyelids of their veils and guess at the sizes.

A very odd boot is that worn by the Bedouins. It is of goatskin, dyed yellow or red, and it has heels of camel-hide, with an iron strip running around them. It reaches halfway to the knee. It retails at about \$2 a pair. None of

## Trellis Tomato

Grows 15 feet high. Each plant bears an immense number of tomatoes. One vine should supply an entire family all summer. The most wonderful Tomato in the world. Photo of my Tomato in the world. Photo of my Tomato in the world. Photo of my Tomato in the world.

the shoes are made by machinery, and most of them are sewed, rather than pressed.

## Hats Blocked--One Cent.

How would you like to have your hat blocked, ironed and brushed for 1 cent? That is what you can do in Damascus. The hat bazaar has scores of stores for the purpose. The most common cap is the red fez, a round felt bowl, which fits tight around the head, without rim or brim. It is about five inches high, and must be pressed every few days to keep it in shape. The bazaar has a zinc-covered table, in which are several small holes, filled with fires of burning charcoal. He has brass frames, or blocks, over which the cap will just fit, and shells of metal which may be clamped upon them to mold the cap into form. After this the frame is laid over one of the fires, and in a moment the heat gives it the latest and most fashionable shape.

Other bazaars are devoted to the selling of silks, and others to the finest of cloths. The richer Mohammedans have their long robes made of the best possible stuffs, and they delight in fine garments. The women shop in these bazaars. They go out so wrapped up in black sheets, tied in at the waist, that they look like giantesses peep out through their veils as they examine the goods, and will bargain an hour in buying a needle. I am told they sometimes raise their veils to entice the merchants to lower their prices, but if I have not seen them, and I have been told by my guide that if I wish to keep my head on I had best turn my eyes in another direction.

## The Louse Market.

There is one Damascus bazaar in which I walk carefully and as far as possible keep in midstreet. It is called the Louse Market, and you may know why when I tell you it is devoted to the second-hand clothes. The bazaar is just back of the citadel and not far from Straight Street. It is filled with customers and dealers from morning until evening, and auctioneers walk back and forth through it, each carrying a garment, which he holds up, asking for bids. He prattles and he tells the crowd that the things will be sold for a song.

## Famous Book Sellers.

I spent a short time in the booksellers' bazaar, but my guide, Shammas, dragged me away, fearing that we might be insulted and mobbed. The dealers are such rich Mohammedans that they do not wish to even sell to the Christians. The shops are near the gate of the Great Mosque, and among their wares are many copies of the Koran, the Mohammedan Bible. I picked up one and asked the merchant the price. He scoffed and angrily exclaimed: "Put it down! That book is not for you. Put it down! Put it down! We do not sell our holy book to the Christians!"

Thereupon, as I saw he was growing angry, I dropped it, saying: "We Christians are glad to give or sell our Bibles to any one, and as for you, Korans, I can buy them by the ton in New York or London." The Moslems here are noted for their hatred of Christians, and one of the bloodiest massacres of modern times occurred in Damascus about fifty years ago. The people are no better to-day, and they are almost as ignorant as they were then. The chief books sold are religious. There are also some story books and copies of the "Arabian Nights" in one or two parts or as a whole.

The Great Mohammedan Stomach. During our trip through the bazaars we found the Mohammedan stomach everywhere in evidence. These people like good food, and they eat it, it seems to me, from morning till night. Peddlers carrying candy, lemonade and cakes march through the bazaars, crying their wares; bread men sit on the sidewalks; and there are shops which sell nothing but pretzels. The most common bread is a flat, round cake as thick as the backwaters which we use for breakfast, and a foot or more in diameter. These cakes are white or brown in color. They are so pliable that they can be doubled up without

## IN THE "LOUSE MARKET."

flow water like the rivers which feed this city and make fertile its plains. Damascus is noted for its sweetsmeats, and its candies are shipped far and wide over the world. The sweets are sold in the bazaars, some of the merchants having large shops. There is one dear old turbaned sheik who has a cell in a candy bazaar, where you can buy nuts and fruits fit for the queen of the fairies. His sugared almonds are the joy of the tourist, and his Turkish Delight, a soft, sweet, transparent paste, with pistachios and other small nuts scattered through it, is a dish for the gods.

## Begging for Custom.

Stop a moment and listen to the cries of the peddlers. Shammas will interpret them for us. Here is a man selling bread hot from the oven. He yells: "Ya rezak!" or "God, send me a customer," and follows by showing a cake and saying: "All this for 2 cents." Another coming behind cries out in Arabic: "Buy my bread and the good God will nourish you!" and a third says: "My cakes are food for the swallows and the delight of tender and delicate girls."

Here comes a lemonade man. He has a big glass jar slung to his back with a neck shaped that he can tilt its contents into a cup. He has two brazen bowls, which he holds in his hands and rattles as he shouts: "Drink and refresh thy heart." Another peddler has ice cream, the coolest of which he cries forth in the words: "Balak snanak," or "Take care of your teeth," meaning it is so cold that it will make your teeth ache. Fruit is sold the same way, and also cooked meats of various kinds. There is one kind of salad which the men cry out is so tender that if an old woman eats it she will find herself young in the morning.

Some such wares are bought by the charitable and given to beggars. The rest of the bread and meat and also of drinks. Some even buy bread for the dogs, hoping thereby to acquire merit and thus pave their road to the Mohammedan heaven.

## Ent-Tailed Mutton.

Making our way through the crowds we reach a region of cookshops, restaurants and cafes not far from where the butcher shops are. The latter sell most kinds of meat, including camel, beef, mutton and lamb. The mutton is fine. The sheep are of the fat-tailed variety, and when skinned and dressed for the market their tails are left on. They hang down over their backs in great lumps of fat, looking like a loaf of fresh dough ready for baking. Sometimes they have the form of a heart four or five inches thick and eight inches long, and the tail weighs fifteen pounds at the most. Upon a live sheep it hangs down at the rear like a woolly apron, and when raised looks like a miniature sail, showing an expanse of bare white skin beneath.

## The Grain Bazaar.

Another interesting part of business Damascus is composed of long, streets of cave-like vaults filled with cement and divided up into compartments piled with grain, beans or flour. This is the grain bazaar. One of the compartments may hold a hundred bushels of wheat, or oats or lentils. There are bins filled with lucifer corn and bins of caraway seeds. The grain lies on the floor and is scooped up and measured to order. Camels come in, knocking great bags of wheat and oat carrying over their backs to various parts of the city. The country about Damascus, which can be irrigated, is exceedingly rich and it produces large crops. A great deal of grain is brought from the plains beyond the Taurus, and one the east of the Sea of Galilee, known as the Hauran, and this grain is shipped from Damascus to other parts of Syria and across the Mediterranean to Europe.

The Wholesale Establishments. Indeed, the trade of Damascus is extensive. The city makes wares of various kinds, which are shipped all over the world. It is noted for its beautiful brass and silverware, its inland wood-work and its Oriental rugs. It has an extensive caravan trade with Persia and other parts of Turkey, and long lines of camels are always bringing in and carrying one goods. There are some great buildings or khans devoted to wholesaling and warehousing. I visited one of these. It was shaped much like a mosque, being lighted by nine great domes, the tops of which were at least 100 feet above the dirt floor. The domes were upheld by stone pillars. The floor covered almost an acre, and it was packed with merchants. In one part of it were bags of wheat piled high toward the roof. In another were hundreds of boxes of dates, and in others barrels and crates of fruit and hundreds of bales of Oriental rugs, laid one upon another. Some of the bales were enormous, one equalling a load for a two-horse wagon. I was told that they came from Bagdad and were left there for storage. There were a number of these khans in Damascus at the time of Christ, and there are several now in use. The space in them is rented out to merchants, the owners doing a general warehousing business.

## In the Silver Bazaar.

But come, let us go to the silver bazaar. This, like the warehouse establishment, is under one roof. It is composed of scores of silversmith shops or booths scattered over a large room of more than an acre. Each merchant has his own little quarry. He sits

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P. S. Owing to the very limited supply of Salvarsan it is not expected that this announcement will again appear for six months.

## Cobham Social News

(Special to The Times-Dispatch.)

Cobham, Va., February 4.—The Cobham Bridge club was entertained Wednesday by Mr. and Mrs. W. T. Rankin of "Tall Oaks." Among those present were Mr. and Mrs. Houghton, Mr. and Mrs. Sholto Douglas, Mr. and Mrs. Shackelford, Mrs. Joslin, Misses Gertrude Randolph, Mr. and Mrs. Holland of New Hampshire, Mrs. Chapman, Mrs. Bloom, Mr. Mann and Mr. and Mrs. Rankin. Mrs. and Mr. Notting and Mr. Houghton left Saturday for Charleston, S. C., to be the guests of Mrs. Houghton's sister, Mrs. Barclay, for the month of February.

Miss J. M. Page and Mrs. T. W. Page, of the University of Virginia, were guests at Kewick last week.

Mrs. Roland of New York, has been the guest of Mrs. Sholto Douglas.

Mrs. W. D. Notting and her daughter are at home again after a visit of several weeks to Richmond.

Miss Amelia Money has returned to her home after a delightful visit to friends in Washington.

Mrs. Ella Page was the weekend guest of Mr. and Mrs. Houghton at Forest Lodge.

Mr. and Mrs. Sholto Douglas left Thursday for a winter trip to New York.

Mrs. N. M. Page, of Kewick, has returned from a visit to her son, Dr. J. M. Page, of the University of Virginia.

Miss Landon lives, after an illness of several weeks at her home, Castle Hill, has gone to Bermuda.

Mrs. M. A. Sadler has returned from a visit to relatives in Charlottesville.

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